COLORADO RIVER BASIN SALINITY CONTROL ACT AMENDMENTS

SPEECH OF

HON. JAMES V. HANSEN

OF UTAH

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, October 23, 2000

Mr. HANSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 1211, the Colorado River Basin Salinity Control Act. This act is a tremendous step forward in addressing water quality issues of the Colorado River. Through the passage of S. 1211 we are making practical the control of salinity upstream from the Imperial Dam in a cost-effective manner.

In 1995, we created a pilot program authorizing the award of up to $75 million in grants, on a competitive-bid basis, for salinity control projects in the Colorado River Basin. The result of this pilot program has been a substantial drop in the cost per ton of salt removal. This legislation increases the program to $175 million in grants in order to continue to provide assistance to further reduce the salt content of the Colorado River.

This bill is part of a long-term strategy to keep salt from running off into the Colorado River which flows 1,450 miles through Utah, California and five other Western States. The Bureau of Reclamation is authorized to rehabilitate miles of irrigation canals by lining them with clay, cement and other materials or with pipes to keep the water from seeping into the soil. Reducing the nine million tons of salt picked up by the Colorado River on its trip downstream helps farmers and all water users from Utah through Nevada and Arizona to California.

By addressing the salinity issue, we not only protect the water supply of approximately 25 million people who depend on the drinking water delivered by the Colorado River, we also encourage landowners to control erosion and runoff of soils and salts into it. Mr. Speaker, this bill is an extremely important measure to ensure the lifeline of the American West remains as such.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 4635, DEPARTMENTS OF VETERANS AFFAIRS AND HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND INDEPENDENT AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2001

SPEECH OF

HON. F. JAMES SENSENBRENNER, JR.

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 19, 2000

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Mr. Speaker, as the House proceeds to consider the Conference Report accompanying H.R. 4635, the Veterans Administration and Housing and Urban Development Appropriations Act of Fiscal Year 2001, I wish to highlight several provisions of this legislation that are important to our nation's science enterprise.

NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION

By providing a total of $14.3 billion for NASA in FY01, this bill increases NASA's budget above the President's request by some $250 million and represents an increase of $683 million over the previous fiscal year. This is a significant increase for NASA and represents continued strong Congressional support for the agency's mission, following on the heels of passage of H.R. 1654, the NASA reauthorization bill, which is now awaiting the President's signature.

The bill fully funds the Space Shuttle, the International Space Station, Mars exploration, and the Space Launch Initiative. Equally significant, this bill provides the resources necessary to permit NASA to fund a broad range of space science programs, life and microgravity research activities, earth science, and aeronautics research. It is vitally important that NASA continue to maintain an array of ongoing, basic research and development programs.

There are some areas of concern NASA must continue to deal with, including serious programmatic slips in the X–33, X–34, and the X–37 programs. NASA must also endeavor to improve its management under the ''faster, better, cheaper'' paradigm, insuring that missions are designed without taking on unreasonable levels of risk.

I am also greatly concerned about NASA's apparent efforts to sole-source a $600 million research contract under the ''Living With a Star'' program. NASA appears to be bending acquisition rules to preclude our national community of research and development laboratories from competing for this very important initiative. I am disturbed by NASA's actions and will continue to monitor this contract to insure that their justification for sole-source meets the spirit and letter of the law.

That being said, I support increased funding for NASA as provided in H.R. 4635 and compliment Veterans Administration and Housing and Urban Development Subcommittee Chairman WALSH for his efforts to strengthen NASA's programs. The funding levels and initiatives contained in this bill bode well for NASA's future.

NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

Concerning the National Science Foundation, I support the provisions in the conference report providing a Fiscal Year 2001 funding level of $4.4 billion, the largest NSF budget ever and an increase of $529 million over the previous fiscal year.

I think it is important that the role of NSF in providing the intellectual capital needed both for economic growth and biomedical research be more widely recognized. We are in the midst of one of the Nation's longest economic expansions that owes much to the technological changes driven by basic scientific research conducted 10 to 15 years ago. Many of today's new industries, which provide good, high paying jobs, can be linked directly to research supported by NSF in the 1980s and 1990s. Moreover, many of the breakthroughs in biomedical research have their underpinnings in research and technologies developed by investigators under NSF grants.

I wish to emphasize, too, the critical research in information technology carried out under the National Science Foundation's auspices. Future developments in computational research will help scientists in the U.S. advance the boundaries of all fields of science, and is vitally important that the U.S. maintain a leadership role in information technology. Reflecting this commitment, the Science Committee successfully passed H.R. 2086 through the House, legislation calling for new government emphasis in this important field. H.R. 4635 significantly increases funding for information technology research, and again I commend Mr. WALSH for his support of NSF and IT research spending.

Mr. Speaker, while I support the funding levels provided for National Aeronautics and Space Administration and the National Science Foundation, there are also provisions in this bill that I oppose. Unfortunately H.R. 4733, the Energy and Water Appropriations bill, has been added to the Veterans Administration and Housing and Urban Development Appropriations bill. Of particular concern is the National Ignition Facility. The Department of Energy has badly mismanaged this program, potentially wasting over $900 million of taxpayers' money without any clear indication that NIF will actually work. NIF is over budget, behind schedule, and may not work. In the face of these difficulties, I think it is wrong to reward DOE's incompetence by providing—as this conference report does—$199 million for the project.

I voted against overturning the President's veto on the Energy and Water Conference Report just last week and I will vote against this measure today. I regret that H.R. 4733 has been made part of the Veterans Administration and Housing and Urban Development Appropriations bill.

AIR FORCE RESEARCH LABORATORY

HON. WILLIAM M. THOMAS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 24, 2000

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, on November 14th the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) will award Air Force Research Laboratory Rocket Site facilities at Edwards Air Force Base a historic aerospace site designation. The AIAA is absolutely right: the Research Lab truly is one of the nation's most important aerospace facilities and it does have a rich history of service to the nation.

The significance of the role the Air Force Research Laboratory has played in our defense and conquest of space is illustrated by the other places the AIAA will name historic sites this year. The AIAA is naming Tranquility Base on the Moon, where Americans first touched down, as an historic site. Similarly, they are honoring Dutch Flats Airport, where Lindbergh tested the Spirit of St. Louis, the original Aerojet Engineering Company plant in Pasadena and the Massachusetts farm where Dr. Robert Goddard tested the first liquid propellant rocket in 1926, as historic sites. Including the Research Laboratory in this group shows the value knowledgeable people place on the Air Force Research Laboratory's over 50 years of research, testing and development.

A brief review of the work that has been done and is being done at the Research Laboratory makes it easy to understand why the